

Sūrah Ash-Shu‘arā’

(The Poets)

Sūrah Ash-Shu‘arā’ was revealed in Makkah and it has 227 Verses and 11 sections

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 9

طَسَمَ ﴿١﴾ تِلْكَ آيَةُ الْكِتَابِ الْمُبِينِ ﴿٢﴾ لَعَلَّكَ بَاخِعٌ نَفْسَكَ أَلَّا يَكُونُوا مُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٣﴾ إِنَّ نَّشَأَ نُنَزِّلُ عَلَيْهِمْ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ آيَةً فَظَلَّتْ أَعْنَاقُهُمْ لَهَا خَاضِعِينَ ﴿٤﴾ وَمَا يَأْتِيهِمْ مِنْ ذِكْرِ مِنَ الرَّحْمَنِ مُحَدَّثٍ إِلَّا كَانُوا عَنْهُ مُعْرِضِينَ ﴿٥﴾ فَقَدْ كَذَّبُوا فَسَيَأْتِيهِمْ أَنْبَاءُ مَا كَانُوا بِهِ يَسْتَهْزِءُونَ ﴿٦﴾ أَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا إِلَى الْأَرْضِ كَمْ أَنْبَتْنَا فِيهَا مِنْ كُلِّ زَوْجٍ كَرِيمٍ ﴿٧﴾ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَةً ۖ وَمَا كَانَ أَكْثَرُهُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٨﴾ وَإِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الرَّحِيمُ ﴿٩﴾

Tā sīn mīm. [1] These are the verses of the manifest Book. [2] Seemingly you are going to let yourself collapse in grief because they do not believe. [3] If We so will, We can send down to them a sign from the sky before which their necks will stay bent in submission. [4] And there comes to them no new message from the Raḥmān, but they become averse to it. [5] Thus they rejected (the Truth); so soon will come to them the real descriptions of what they used to ridicule. [6] Have they not looked at the earth, how many of the noble pairs (of vegetation) We have caused to grow therein? [7] Surely, in this there is a sign, and most of them are not to

believe [8] And surely your Lord is the Mighty, the Merciful. [9]

Commentary

لَعَلَّكَ بِاِخْع تُنْسَك (Seemingly you are going to let yourself collapse in grief - 26:3). The word بِاِخْع (bākhi') is derived from بَخْع (bakh') which means to reach up to Bikhā', an artery of the neck, while slaughtering. In this verse bākhi' is used in the sense of putting oneself into trouble and toil. 'Allāmāh 'Askarī has said, 'Although at such places the sentence appears to be informative but in fact it means to prohibit or prevent'. What it conveys is that, 'O Messenger, do not be so despondent because of your people's disbelief and rejection of Islam that you cause yourself to collapse'. One learns from this verse that even if it is apparent that a disbeliever would not convert to Islam, still it is not right to stop preaching to him. The second thing one learns is that the efforts one makes for a certain objective must be balanced and moderate, and if someone is adamant not to be guided to the right path, one should not be over-grieved.

اِنْ نَّشَأْ نُنَزِّلْ عَلَيْهِمْ مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ آيَةً فَظَلَّتْ اَعْنَاقُهُمْ لَهَا خَاضِعِينَ

If We so will, We can send down to them a sign from the sky before which their necks will stay bent in submission. - 26:4

Allāmāh Zamakhsharī has explained that the real intent of the text is to say that the disbelievers themselves will stay in submission, but the act of submission is attributed in the verse to their "necks", so that the initial object of submission is pinpointed, because yielding or bowing in humility initially appears on the neck. The substance of the message of this verse is that Allah Ta'ālā also has full authority and control to evince any sign of His Oneness and Omnipotence which brings forth the religious injunctions and the Divine Truth in such a self-evident manner that no one would have the ability to reject it. But the wisdom demands that these injunctions and the understanding of God are not made self-evident but remain visionary, so that they are dependent on deliberations and pondering. This pondering and deliberation is actually the test of man on which the reward and punishment is adjudged. Acceptance of self-evident things is a natural and involuntary phenomenon which lacks the quality of deliberate obedience. (Qurtubī)

زَوْجَ كَرِيمٍ (noble pair - 26:7). The word زَوْجَ (zawj) literally means a pair. That is why man and woman, and male and female are called *Zawj*. Many species of trees have male and female among them. On this basis they can also be called *Zawj* (زَوْج). Sometimes the word *Zawj* is also used for a special kind. On the basis of this meaning all species of trees can be called *Zawj*. The meaning of *Karīm* is a nice and favourite thing.

Verses 10 - 33

وَإِذْ نَادَىٰ رَبُّكَ مُوسَىٰ أَنْ ائْتِ الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿١٠﴾ قَوْمَ فِرْعَوْنَ ۖ
 أَلَا يَتَّقُونَ ﴿١١﴾ قَالَ رَبِّ إِنِّي أَخَافُ أَنْ يُكَذِّبُونِ ﴿١٢﴾ وَيَضِيقُ
 صَدْرِي وَلَا يَنْطَلِقُ لِسَانِي فَأَرْسِلْ إِلَىٰ هَرُونَ ﴿١٣﴾ وَلَهُمْ عَلَىٰ
 ذَنْبٍ فَأَخَافُ أَنْ يَقْتُلُونِ ﴿١٤﴾ قَالَ كَلَّا ۖ فَادْهَبَا بِأُخْتَيْكُمَا
 مُسْتَمِعُونَ ﴿١٥﴾ فَاتِيَا فِرْعَوْنَ فَقُولَا إِنَّا رَسُولُ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿١٦﴾
 أَنْ أَرْسِلَ مَعَنَا بَنِي إِسْرَءِيلَ ﴿١٧﴾ قَالَ أَلَمْ نُرَبِّكَ فِينَا وَلِيدًا وَلَبِثْتَ
 فِينَا مِنْ عُمُرِكَ سِنِينَ ﴿١٨﴾ وَفَعَلْتَ فَعَلْتِكَ الَّتِي فَعَلْتَ وَأَنْتَ مِنَ
 الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿١٩﴾ قَالَ فَعَلْتُهَا إِذَا وَأَنَا مِنَ الضَّالِّينَ ﴿٢٠﴾ فَفَرَرْتُ
 مِنْكُمْ لَمَّا خِفْتُكُمْ فَوَهَبَ لِي رَبِّي حُكْمًا وَجَعَلَنِي مِنَ الْمُرْسَلِينَ
 ﴿٢١﴾ وَتِلْكَ نِعْمَةٌ تَمُنُّهَا عَلَيَّ أَنْ عَبَّدْتُ بَنِي إِسْرَءِيلَ ﴿٢٢﴾ قَالَ
 فِرْعَوْنُ وَمَا رَبُّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٢٣﴾ قَالَ رَبُّ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا
 بَيْنَهُمَا ۖ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُوقِنِينَ ﴿٢٤﴾ قَالَ لِمَنْ حَوْلَهُ أَلَا تَسْتَمِعُونَ ﴿٢٥﴾
 قَالَ رَبُّكُمْ وَرَبُّ آبَائِكُمُ الْأَوَّلِينَ ﴿٢٦﴾ قَالَ إِنَّ رَسُولَكُمْ الَّذِي
 أُرْسِلَ إِلَيْكُمْ لَمَجْنُونٌ ﴿٢٧﴾ قَالَ رَبُّ الْمَشْرِقِ وَالْمَغْرِبِ وَمَا
 بَيْنَهُمَا ۖ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٢٨﴾ قَالَ لَعْنِ اتَّخَذَتْ إِلَٰهًا غَيْرِي
 لَا جَعَلَنَّاكَ مِنَ الْمَسْجُودِينَ ﴿٢٩﴾ قَالَ أَوَلَوْ جِئْتُكَ بِشَيْءٍ مُبِينٍ

﴿٢٠﴾ قَالَ فَاتِّبِعْهُ إِنَّ كُنْتَ مِنَ الصّٰدِقِيْنَ ﴿٢١﴾ فَٱلْقَىٰ عَصَاهُ فَإِذَا هِيَ ثُعْبَانٌ مُّبِينٌ ﴿٢٢﴾ وَنَزَعَ يَدَهُ فَإِذَا هِيَ بَيْضَاءُ لِلنّٰظِرِيْنَ ﴿٢٣﴾

And (remember) when your Lord called Mūsā saying, "Go to the transgressing people, [10] the people of Fir'aun (the Pharaoh). Do they not fear Allah?" [11] He (Mūsā) said, "My Lord, I fear they will belie me. [12] And my heart gets straitened and my tongue is not fluent; so send for Hārūn. [13] And they have (made) a charge of offence against me and I fear they will kill me;" [14] He (Allah) said, "Never! So go, both of you, with Our signs. We are with you, listening. [15] So, the two of you reach the Fir'aun and say, 'We both are messengers of the Lord of all the worlds, [16] (sent with the message) that you must send the children of Isrā'īl with us'. [17]

He (the Pharaoh) said, "Did we not nourish you among us as a child? And you remained among us for years, [18] and you did that deed of yours which you did while you were among the ungrateful. [19] He said, "I did that at that time when I was one of the unaware people. [20] Then I fled from you when I feared you. Thereafter my Lord granted wisdom to me and made me among the messengers. [21] And this is the favor with which you are obliging me - that you have enslaved the children of Isrā'īl." [22] The Pharaoh said, "And what is the Lord of the worlds?" [23] He (Mūsā) said, "Lord of the heavens and the earth and whatever there is between them, if you are to believe" [24] He (the Pharaoh) said to those around him, "Are you not hearing?" [25] He (Mūsā) said, "Your Lord and the Lord of your early forefathers" [26] He (the Pharaoh) said, "Your messenger who is sent to you is a mad man indeed." [27] He (Mūsā) said, "Lord of the East and the West and whatever there is between them, if you are to understand" [28] He (the Pharaoh) said, "If you take to a God other than me, I will certainly put you among those imprisoned." [29] He (Mūsā) said "Will you (do this) even if I bring to you something evident?" [30] He said, "Then bring it, if you are one of the truthful." [31] So, he threw down his staff, and in no time it was a serpent, clearly visible, [32] and he drew out his hand, and right then it was a white light to the onlookers. [33]

Commentary

Request for favourable conditions for obedience is not tantamount to making excuses

قَالَ رَبِّ إِنِّي أَخَافُ أَنْ يُكَذِّبُونُ ﴿١٢﴾ وَيَضِيقُ صَدْرِي وَلَا يَنْطَلِقُ لِسَانِي فَأَرْسِلْ إِلَى هَارُونَ ﴿١٣﴾ وَلَهُمْ عَلَى ذَنْبٍ فَأَخَافُ أَنْ يَقْتُلُونِ ﴿١٤﴾

He (Mūsā) said, "My Lord, I fear they will belie me. [12] And my heart gets straitened and my tongue is not fluent; so send for Harun. [13] And they have a charge of offence against me and I fear they will kill me;" [14]

This verse indicates that Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام requested Allah to provide him with some resources to help them in carrying out his mission. It leads to the principle that so far as the objective is to obey Allah's command, praying for some helping resources cannot be regarded as seeking ruses and excuses to escape from the required act. The request of Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام was only to facilitate the implementation of Allah's command which is quite lawful.

The meaning of the word dalal used for Sayyidnā Mūsā

قَالَ فَعَلْتُهَا إِذَا وَأَنَا مِنَ الضَّالِّينَ

He said, "I did that at that time when I was one of the unaware people. (26:20)

This was the answer of Mūsā عليه السلام to the objection of the Pharaoh that Mūsā عليه السلام had killed an Egyptian. The gist of the answer is that it was not a deliberate murder; in fact the Egyptian was killed by mistake, because Mūsā عليه السلام had only struck him with a blow which, by accident, caused his death. The word used, by the present verse, for this mistake is derived from ضَلَّال (ḍalāl) which is commonly used for intentional error. But the word is also used for 'unawareness' (which includes unintentional mistakes) It is this meaning that is intended here. This interpretation is supported by Qatādah and Ibn Zaid رحمهم الله تعالى.

It is impossible for man to comprehend fully the entity and reality of the magnificence of Allah Ta‘ālā

قَالَ فِرْعَوْنُ وَمَا رَبُّ الْعَالَمِينَ

Pharaoh said, "And what is the Lord of the worlds?" (26:23)

This verse proves that it is not possible to know the exact reality of Allah's Being. Since the Pharaoh had asked a question regarding Allah Ta‘ālā's intrinsic-self and reality, Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام instead of giving a direct answer to his query, described the attributes of Allah Ta‘ālā in reply. He hinted in his reply that it is not possible for a man to perceive the essence and reality of Allah Ta‘ālā. Hence, it was a futile question. (Rūh)

أَنْ أَرْسِلَ مَعَنَا بَنِي إِسْرَءِيلَ

That you must send the children of Isra‘īl with us". (26:17)

Banī Isra‘īl were the residents of Syria. They wanted to go back to their land but the Pharaoh would not let them. This way four hundred years had passed and they were living in his bondage like slaves. At that time they were six hundred and thirty thousand in number. Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام when presented the message of Truth to the Pharaoh, he also asked him to stop all the cruelties he had perpetrated over Banī Isra‘īl and to let them go to their homeland. (Qurṭubī)

An example of prophetic dialectic

Discussion and debate among two different persons or group of people having divergent views has been in vogue since the time immemorial. Such debates are called مُنَازَعَة *munāẓarah* (dialectics) in conventional terms. But such dialectics have been reduced to a game of win or lose. People regard the outcome of dialectics should be to come out winner, even though one knows that he is on the wrong. Despite the knowledge of being on the wrong one must keep on pressing his point of view, and use the intelligence to throw in all sorts of arguments to prove his point as correct. Similarly, even if the opponents point is correct, it must be rejected with full force. In contrast to this attitude Islam has given a middle of the road stance, and set out its rules and regulations, thus making it a useful tool for preaching and reform.

A simple example of this can be seen in the above verses. When Sayyidnā Mūsā and Hārūn عليهم السلام conveyed the invitation of Truth to the mighty the Pharaoh, who was claimant of being god, in his court, he began the opposing conversation with two questions relating to the person of Mūsā's عليه السلام. When a sharp opponent is not properly equipped with the

correct arguments, he normally tries to switch the conversation towards the person of the addressee in order to find faults with him. This tactic is employed to embarrass the opponent and to make him look small before the audience. Hence, the Pharaoh also came out with two such points. First, ‘We have brought you up in our household and have done so many favours to you. So, how can you have the face to speak before us.’ Second, ‘You have killed an Egyptian for no fault of his. This is not only cruelty but also ingratitude toward those among whom you are raised to your manhood. You have killed one from among us.’ Now see the prophetic reply of Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام and how he handled the two subjects. In the first place he changed the sequence of the topics in that he brought up the case of the Egyptian first which the Pharaoh had raised latter. The wisdom in changing the sequence appears to be that in the Egyptian's case there was a weakness on his part, but he preferred to take that first, unlike present day tactics where one tries to avoid a direct reply to confuse the issue. But he, being the messenger of Allah, had nothing to hide, so while replying he accepted his weakness, and did not care at all what people in the opposition would think on acceptance of his mistake, and hence, might take it as acceptance of defeat. This course of action was totally contrary to present day tactics when people try to mix up their weakness in a manner that it is camouflaged.

Although Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام had accepted his fault while replying to the Pharaoh that it was his misjudgment when he hit the Egyptian and as a result he died, yet he made it very clear that he did not intend to kill him. His intention was right which unfortunately resulted in the wrong. The purpose of his hitting the Egyptian was to prevent him from harming the Isrā’īlī but in the process he died, which was not the intention. This act of his, despite being wrong, does not conflict with his claim to be a prophet or contradicts its veracity. So, he said ‘that he realized his mistake and left the city for the fear of being caught. Then Allah was kind to him and honoured him with the prophethood.

Now the point to ponder is that at that time Mūsā عليه السلام could have adopted the simple and straightforward course and have claimed that the Egyptian deserved death, and would have charged him with such accusations for which his killing was the right action. There was no one present at the time of the incident, so no one could have contradicted him.

Anyone else in his place would have certainly taken this course of action. But here it was the resolute messenger of Allah who was the truth personified and who regarded expression of truth and veracity and the declaration of fact as his victory. He accepted his guilt in the packed court of the foe and in doing that also countered any possibility of doubt on his prophethood.

After that he turned to the second point regarding his upbringing in the Pharaoh’s house, upon which the Pharaoh had stressed to remind his favour to him. Mūsā عليه السلام asked him to ponder over his position as, being an Israelite, he had no occasion to reach the royal place of the Pharaoh. It was the cruelty of the Pharaoh that compelled the mother of Musa عليه السلام to throw her baby into the river, then it was by chance that the Pharaoh picked him up, and in reality it was a wise arrangement made by Allah, that the child for the fear of whom the Pharaoh had slaughtered thousands of children, was caused to be nourished by the same the Pharaoh. But in any case, the real cause of his upbringing in the home of the Pharaoh was the cruelty exercised by him against the Israelites. Musa عليه السلام pointing out to this fact, invited the Pharaoh to ponder whether this was really a favour with which he was obliging him. It is obvious that this prophetic address left a positive and convincing impression on the minds of people present there, and they were convinced that Mūsā عليه السلام was not the sort of person who would make excuses, and that he would say nothing but the truth. After that when they saw the miracles, their view was confirmed further. At that time although the Pharaoh did not admit the truth, yet he was so overwhelmed and apprehensive that just two persons without having the support of a third, would turn him and his people out of their land and country.

This is what is known as God gifted awe of truth, veracity and reality. The contentions and dialectics of Allah’s messengers are also full of truth, veracity and wishing well for the addressee. That is how they become so appealing to people and convince the biggest defiant.

Verses 34 - 51

قَالَ لِلْمَلَاحِزَةِ إِنَّ هَذَا لَسَجْرٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٣٤﴾ يُرِيدُ أَنْ يُخْرِجَكُمْ مِّنْ

أَرْضَكُمْ بِسِحْرِهِ ۖ فَمَاذَا تَأْمُرُونَ ﴿٣٥﴾ قَالُوا أَرْجِهْ وَأَخَاهُ وَأُبْعَثْ
 فِي الْمَدَائِنِ خَشِيرِينَ ﴿٣٦﴾ يَأْتُوكَ بِكُلِّ سَحَابٍ عَلِيمٍ ﴿٣٧﴾ فَجَمَعَ
 السَّحَرَةُ لِمِيقَاتِ يَوْمٍ مَّعْلُومٍ ﴿٣٨﴾ وَقِيلَ لِلنَّاسِ هَلْ أَنْتُمْ
 مُجْتَمِعُونَ ﴿٣٩﴾ لَعَلَّنَا نَتَّبِعَ السَّحَرَةَ إِنْ كَانُوا هُمْ الْغَالِبِينَ ﴿٤٠﴾
 فَلَمَّا جَاءَ السَّحَرَةُ قَالُوا لِفِرْعَوْنَ أَئِنَّا لَنَأَجْرُا إِنْ كُنَّا نَحْنُ
 الْغَالِبِينَ ﴿٤١﴾ قَالَ نَعَمْ وَإِنَّكُمْ إِذَا لَمِنَ الْمُقَرَّبِينَ ﴿٤٢﴾ قَالَ لَهُمْ
 مُوسَى أَلْقُوا مَا أَنْتُمْ مُلْقُونَ ﴿٤٣﴾ فَأَلْقَوْا حِبَالَهُمْ وَعِصِيَّهُمْ وَقَالُوا
 بِعِزَّةِ فِرْعَوْنَ إِنَّا لَنَحْنُ الْغَالِبُونَ ﴿٤٤﴾ فَأَلْقَى مُوسَى عَصَاهُ فَإِذَا هِيَ
 تَلْقَفُ مَا يَأْفِكُونَ ﴿٤٥﴾ فَأَلْقَى السَّحَرَةُ سَجِيدِينَ ﴿٤٦﴾ قَالُوا آمَنَّا
 بِرَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٤٧﴾ رَبِّ مُوسَى وَهَارُونَ ﴿٤٨﴾ قَالَ آمَنْتُمْ لَهُ قَبْلَ
 أَنْ آذَنَ لَكُمْ ۖ إِنَّهُ لَكَبِيرُكُمُ الَّذِي عَلَّمَكُمُ السِّحْرَ ۚ فَلَسَوْفَ
 تَعْلَمُونَ ۚ لَا قُطْعَنَ أَيَّدِيكُمُ وَأَرْجُلُكُم مِّنْ خِلَافٍ وَلَا وَصَلَبْنَكُمْ
 أَجْمَعِينَ ﴿٤٩﴾ قَالُوا لَا ضَيْرَ إِنَّا إِلَى رَبِّنَا مُنْقَلِبُونَ ﴿٥٠﴾ إِنَّا نَطْمَعُ أَنْ
 يَغْفِرَ لَنَا رَبُّنَا خَطِيئَاتِنَا أَنْ كُنَّا أَوَّلَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٥١﴾

He (the Pharaoh) said to the chiefs around him "This man is certainly an expert sorcerer". [34] He wants to expel you from your land with his sorcery. So what do you suggest?" [35] They said, "Leave him and his brother alone for a while and send to the cities men to collect, [36] so that they bring to you every highly expert sorcerer." [37]

So the sorcerers were assembled for the appointed time of a known day, [38] and it was said to the people, "Would you assemble, [39] so that we may follow the sorcerers if they are victorious?" [40] So, when the sorcerers came, they said to the Pharaoh, "Will there really be a reward for us, if we are the victorious?" [41] He said, "Yes, and of course, you will then be among the

closer ones." [42]

Mūsā said to them, "Throw you down what you are to throw." [43] So they threw down their ropes and their staffs and said, "By the majesty of the Pharaoh we are going to Prevail definitely." [44] Then Mūsā threw down his staff, and in no time it started swallowing the falsehood they invented. [45] So the sorcerers were made (by the truth they saw) to fall down in prostration. [46] They said, "We have believed in the Lord of the worlds, [47] the Lord of Mūsā and Hārūn." [48]

He (the Pharaoh) said, "you believed in him before I permit you. Surely, he (Mūsā) is the chief of you all who has taught you sorcery. So you will soon know (your fate). I will cut off your hands and feet from different sides and will crucify you all together. [49] They said, "There is no harm. We are to return to our Lord. [50] We really hope that our Lord will forgive us our faults, as we are the first of the believers." [51]

Commentary.

الْقَوْمَا أَنتُمْ مُلْقُونَ

Mūsā said to them, "Throw you down what you are to throw." (26:43)

Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام said to the magicians 'You show the magic you wish to show'. With a cursory look one might be inclined to think that Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام ordered them to perform their magic. But with a little deep thinking it becomes clear that actually it was not an order from Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام to show magic, but the real intention was to demonstrate the fallacy of magic. This demonstration was not possible without the magic shown by them. Therefore, he asked them to show their tricks or magic. It is exactly like a *zindīq* (an extreme heretic) is asked to put forward his arguments, so that they may be countered. It is obvious that such an invitation cannot be treated as an acceptance of infidelity.

بِعِزَّةِ فِرْعَوْنَ (By the majesty of the Pharaoh - 26:44). This was an expression of pledge from the magicians, which was in vogue in the olden times. It is unfortunate that similar oaths have now become common

among the Muslims as well, which are even more evil and vile, for instance, 'by the king,' 'by the head of yours,' 'by the beard of yours,' 'by the grave of your father' etc. It is not permitted to make an oath of this nature under the Islamic law (because swearing in the name of someone other than Allah is a sin). Rather, it will not be wrong to say that swearing a true oath in this way is as much sinful as swearing a false oath in the name of Allah. (Rūḥ)

قَالُوا لَا ضَيْرَ إِنَّا إِلَىٰ رَبِّنَا مُنْقَلِبُونَ

They said, "There is no harm. We are to return to our Lord.
(26:50)

When the Pharaoh threatened the magicians to kill them, and to cut their limbs and to crucify them, the magicians replied rather indifferently, the gist of their reply was, 'You do whatever you can. We shall lose nothing. Even if we are killed we will go back to our Lord, where there is nothing but comfort'.

It is worth noting here that the magicians who had involved all their lives practicing the sinful sorcery and who believed in the Pharaoh's claim to be a god, rather, used to worship him, pronounced faith in Allah before that tyrant and despotic king and the entire nation. This was in itself something most astonishing and courageous, but it was not just the pronouncement of faith in Allah, but a demonstration of such deep devotion as if they could see the Dooms Day and the Hereafter before their eyes. The blessings and bounties of the Hereafter were within their sight, for which they raised themselves over and above any punishment or torment of this world, and said **فَأَقْضِ مَا أَنْتَ قَاضٍ** that is 'You do whatever you are to do (20:72). We are not going back from our faith'. This in fact was also a miracle of Sayyidnā Mūsā **عليه السلام**, which was no less than the miracle of the staff and the luminous hand. Many incidents of similar nature have also occurred with our Holy Prophet **ﷺ**. In one such incident a drastic change had occurred in a seventy years old infidel in that within a minute he not only converted to Islam, but was ready to lay down his life to become a martyr.

Verses 52 - 68

وَأَوْحَيْنَا إِلَىٰ مُوسَىٰ أَنْ أَسْرِ بِعِبَادِي ۖ إِنَّكُمْ مُّتَّبِعُونَ ﴿٥٢﴾ فَأَرْسَلَ

فَرَعَوْهُ فِي الْمَدَائِنِ حَشِيرِينَ ﴿٥٢﴾ إِنَّ هَؤُلَاءِ لَشِرْذِمَةٌ قَلِيلُونَ
 ﴿٥٣﴾ وَإِنَّهُمْ لَنَا لَغَائِظُونَ ﴿٥٤﴾ وَإِنَّا لَجَمِيعٌ حَازِلُونَ ﴿٥٥﴾
 فَأَخْرَجْنَاهُمْ مِنْ جَنَّاتٍ وَعُيُونٍ ﴿٥٦﴾ وَكُنُوزٍ وَمَقَامٍ كَرِيمٍ ﴿٥٧﴾
 كَذَلِكَ ۖ وَأَوْرَثْنَاهَا بَنِي إِسْرَءِيلَ ﴿٥٨﴾ فَاتَّبَعُوهُمْ مُشْرِقِينَ ﴿٥٩﴾
 فَلَمَّا تَرَاءَ الْجَمْعَانِ قَالَ أَصْحَابُ مُوسَى إِنَّا لَمُدْرِكُونَ ﴿٦٠﴾ قَالَ
 كَلَّا ۚ إِنَّ مَعِيَ رَبِّي سَيَهْدِينِ ﴿٦١﴾ فَأَوْحَيْنَا إِلَى مُوسَى أَنْ اضْرِبْ
 بِعَصَاكَ الْبَحْرَ ۖ فَانْفَلَقَ فَكَانَ كُلُّ فِرْقٍ كَالطَّوْدِ الْعَظِيمِ ﴿٦٢﴾ وَ
 أَرْزَلْنَاهُمْ لَبًّا ۖ وَبَسَطْنَا الْبِحْثَ ۖ فَخَسَفَ بِهُمْ عَذَابَهُمْ ۚ إِنَّهُمْ
 لَكَاذِبُونَ ﴿٦٣﴾ ثُمَّ أَغْرَقْنَا الْآخَرِينَ ﴿٦٤﴾ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَةً ۖ وَمَا كَانَ أَكْثَرُهُمْ
 مُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٦٥﴾ وَإِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الرَّحِيمُ ﴿٦٦﴾

And We revealed to Mūsā saying, "Make My slaves travel at night. You will be pursued." [52] So the Pharaoh sent into the cities (his) men to muster (people) [53] saying, "These are a small band, [54] and indeed they are enraging us, [55] and we are a host, well-armed." [56]

So We expelled them from gardens and springs [57] and from treasures and a noble abode. [58] Thus it was. And We made the children of Isrā'īl inherit all these. [59] So they (the people of the Pharaoh) pursued them (the people of Mūsā) at the time of sunrise. [60] And when the two hosts saw each other, the companions of Mūsā said, "Surely we are overtaken." [61] He said, "Never! Indeed with me is my Lord. He will guide me." [62] So We revealed to Mūsā saying, "Strike the sea with your staff." So it was severed apart, and each part became like a big mountain. [63] Then We brought others close to that place. [64] And We saved Mūsā and all those with him. [65] Then we drowned the others. [66] Surely, in this there is a sign, and most of them are not to believe. [67] And your Lord is the Mighty, the Merciful. [68]

Commentary

وَأَوْرَثْنَاهَا بَنِي إِسْرَٰئِيلَ

And We made the children of Isrā‘īl inherit all these. [59]

Apparently it is elucidated in this verse that Banī Isrā‘īl were made the owners of all the material wealth and property left by the people of the Pharaoh after their drowning. But there is a historical issue involved in this statement. The issue is that many Qur’ānic verses indicate the Banī Isrā‘īl did not return to Egypt after the drowning of the Pharaoh’s people. As a matter of fact they went back towards their original home, the holy land of Syria. There they were commanded to fight (wage *jihād*) with an infidel nation in order to enter their city. Banī Isrā‘īl refused to comply with this command, as a punishment of which the open plain where they were camping was made a natural prison for them. They could not come out of that plain and spent forty years over there. It was in that place, which is also known as a valley of Ṭīḥ (Sinai), where their two prophets, Sayyidnā Mūsā and Hārūn عليهم السلام, died. Even after these incidents it is not reported in the books of history that Banī Isrā‘īl as a nation or in collective form had entered Egypt, which might prove that they had taken possession of the wealth and property of the Pharaoh’s people. Tafsīr Rūḥ ul-Ma‘ānī has reproduced two explanations on the authority of eminent commentators, Sayyidnā Ḥasan and Qatādah رضى الله عنهم. Sayyidnā Ḥasan رحمه الله has explained that the verse in question does have a mention that Banī Isrā‘īl were made the heirs of the property of the Pharaoh’s people, but it does not say that this had happened immediately after the death of the Pharaoh. If the Banī Isrā‘īl entered Egypt some forty or fifty years after the incident of the valley of Ṭīḥ, there is no inconsistency in the verse. As for the argument that their collective entry into Egypt is not proved historically, it is not worth taking any notice, because the history of that period was written by Jews and Christians and is full of distortions. There is absolutely no need for interpreting the Qur’ānic verse differently for bringing it in line with the history, whose authenticity itself is questionable.

Sayyidnā Qatādah رحمه الله has explained the situation in another way. He says that although all the Qur’ānic verses which have quoted this incident, for instance, verses 128 and 137 of Sūrah Al-A‘rāf, 5 of Sūrah Al-Qaṣṣaṣ, 25 to 28 of Sūrah Ad-Dukhān, and the verse under reference

of Sūrah Ash-Shu'arā', invite the attention to the point that Banī Isrā'il were given the custody of that very wealth and property which the people of the Pharaoh had left in Egypt, for which it was necessary for the Banī Isrā'il to return to Egypt to take possession. But all these verses can be interpreted to mean that Banī Isrā'il were given the wealth and property equal and similar to that which was possessed by the Pharaoh's people. For this it was not necessary that the same lands and wealth of Egypt are given to Bani Isrā'il. These bounties might have been granted in Syria. This interpretation is more likely in the verse of Sūrah Al-A'raf where the land possessed by Banī Isrā'il is referred to by the words, **الَّتِي بَارَكْنَا فِيهَا** (i.e. the land blessed by Us) because the word **Bāraknā** is used for the land of Syria in many verses of the Qur'an. Therefore, Sayyidnā Qatādah رحمته الله has opined that it is not correct to attribute Qur'anic verses toward something which is in conflict with the history. The gist of the whole explanation is that if it is established through proved facts that Banī Isrā'il did not occupy the land of Egypt at any time after the death of the Pharaoh, then according to explanation of Sayyidnā Qatādah رحمته الله the land of Syria is purported for the wealth and property which was granted to Banī Isrā'il. (Only God knows best)

قَالَ أَصْحَبُ مُوسَى إِنَّا لَمُدْرَكُونَ ﴿٦١﴾ قَالَ كَلَّا إِنَّ مَعِيَ رَبِّي سَيَهْدِينِ ﴿٦٢﴾

(The Companions of Mūsā said: "Surely we are overtaken." He said, "Never! Indeed with me is my Lord. He will guide me - 26:61,62.

When the Pharaoh's army, which was in their pursuit, reached right behind them, all the people of Banī Isrā'il called out 'We are caught'. And there was little doubt in their nabbing as the river was in front of them and the Pharaoh's enormous army behind them. Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام was fully aware of the situation, but his belief in the promise of Allah was unshaken like a rock. He, therefore, replied firmly that they will never be caught. The reasoning for this he gave **إِنَّ مَعِيَ رَبِّي سَيَهْدِينِ** (62) "Indeed with me is my Lord. He will guide me." Such are the moments for the test of faith, when Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام was not terror stricken at all, as if he was seeing for himself the way out. Almost the same thing happened with Holy Prophet ﷺ at the time of migration while hiding in the cave of Thaur. The enemy had reached right at the opening of the cave in his pursuit. In fact they were so close that they could have seen him if they

had looked down towards their toes. Sayyidnā Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه got alarmed a little, but Holy Prophet ﷺ said exactly the same thing لَا تَحْزَنْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَنَا 'Do not grieve, Allah is surely with us' (9:40). It is worth noting in the two incidents that while Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام said to his Ummah in order to console them إِنَّ مَعِيَ رَبِّي 'With me is my Lord', Holy Prophet ﷺ said to Sayyidnā Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه in reply 'Allah is with us (two)'. It is a special privilege of the Ummah of Muḥammad ﷺ that his followers are also honoured by the company of Allah when they are with their Rasūl.

Verses 69 - 104

وَاتْلُ عَلَيْهِمْ نَبَأَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ ﴿٦٩﴾ إِذْ قَالَ لِأَبِيهِ وَقَوْمِهِ مَا تَعْبُدُونَ ﴿٧٠﴾
 قَالُوا نَعْبُدُ أَصْنَامًا فَنَنْظِلُ لَهَا عَكِفِينَ ﴿٧١﴾ قَالَ هَلْ يَسْمَعُونَكُمُ
 إِذْ تَدْعُونَ ﴿٧٢﴾ أَوْ يَنْفَعُونَكُمُ أَوْ يَضُرُّوْنَ ﴿٧٣﴾ قَالُوا بَلْ وَجَدْنَا آبَاءَنَا
 كَذَلِكَ يَفْعَلُونَ ﴿٧٤﴾ قَالَ أَفَرَأَيْتُمْ مَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْبُدُونَ ﴿٧٥﴾ أَنْتُمْ
 وَأَبَاؤُكُمْ الْأَقْدَمُونَ ﴿٧٦﴾ فَإِنَّهُمْ عَدُوٌّ لِّيَ إِلَّا رَبَّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٧٧﴾
 الَّذِي خَلَقَنِي فَهُوَ يَهْدِينِ ﴿٧٨﴾ وَالَّذِي هُوَ يُطْعِمُنِي وَيَسْقِينِ ﴿٧٩﴾
 وَإِذَا مَرِضْتُ فَهُوَ يَشْفِينِ ﴿٨٠﴾ وَالَّذِي يُمَيِّتُنِي ثُمَّ يُحْيِينِ ﴿٨١﴾
 وَالَّذِي أَطْمَعُ أَنْ يَغْفِرَ لِي خَطِيئَتِي يَوْمَ الدِّينِ ﴿٨٢﴾ رَبِّ هَبْ لِي
 حُكْمًا وَالْخِفَافِي بِالصُّلْحَيْنِ ﴿٨٣﴾ وَاجْعَلْ لِي لِسَانَ صِدْقٍ فِي
 الْآخِرِينَ ﴿٨٤﴾ وَاجْعَلْنِي مِنْ وَرَثَةِ جَنَّةِ النَّعِيمِ ﴿٨٥﴾ وَاعْفِرْ لِأَبِي
 إِنَّهُ كَانَ مِنَ الضَّالِّينَ ﴿٨٦﴾ وَلَا تُخْزِنِي يَوْمَ يُبْعَثُونَ ﴿٨٧﴾ يَوْمَ
 لَا يَنْفَعُ مَالٌ وَلَا بَنُونَ ﴿٨٨﴾ إِلَّا مَنْ أَتَى اللَّهَ بِقَلْبٍ سَلِيمٍ ﴿٨٩﴾
 وَأُزْلِفَتِ الْجَنَّةُ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿٩٠﴾ وَبُرِزَتِ الْجَحِيمُ لِلْغَوِينَ ﴿٩١﴾
 وَقِيلَ لَهُمْ آيَنَمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْبُدُونَ ﴿٩٢﴾ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ ۖ هَلْ
 يَنْصُرُونَكُمْ أَوْ يَنْتَصِرُونَ ﴿٩٣﴾ فَكُفُّوا فِيهَا هُمْ وَالْعَاُونَ ﴿٩٤﴾

وَجُنُودُ إِبْلِيسَ أَجْمَعُونَ ﴿٩٥﴾ قَالُوا وَهُمْ فِيهَا يَخْتَصِمُونَ ﴿٩٦﴾
 تَاللَّهِ إِن كُنَّا لَفِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ ﴿٩٧﴾ إِذْ نَسَوْنَكُمْ رَبَّ الْعَالَمِينَ
 ﴿٩٨﴾ وَمَا أَضَلَّنَا إِلَّا الْمُجْرِمُونَ ﴿٩٩﴾ فَمَا لَنَا مِنْ شَافِعِينَ ﴿١٠٠﴾
 وَلَا صَدِيقٍ حَمِيمٍ ﴿١٠١﴾ فَلَوْ أَنَّ لَنَا كَرَّةٌ فَنَكُونُ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ
 ﴿١٠٢﴾ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَةً وَمَا كَانَ أَكْثَرُهُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٠٣﴾ وَإِنَّ
 رَبَّكَ لَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الرَّحِيمُ ﴿١٠٤﴾

And recite before them the narrative of Ibrāhīm, [69] when he said to his father and to his people, "What do you worship?" [70] They said, "We worship idols, and stay devoted to them." [71] He said, "Do they listen to you when you call [72] (them) or do they bring benefit to you or harm [73]?" They said, "No, but we have found our fathers doing like this." [74] He said, "Have you then ever considered what you have been worshipping, [75] you and your ancient fathers, [76] they all are an enemy to me, except the Lord of the worlds, [77] Who created me, then guides me, [78] and Who feeds me and gives me drink, [79] and when I become sick, He heals me, [80] and who will make me die, then will give me life, [81] and who, I hope, will forgive my fault on the Day of Retribution. [82] O my Lord, give me wisdom and join me with the righteous, [83] and destine for me a truthful description among the next generations. [84] And make me among those who will inherit the Garden of Bliss, [85] and forgive my father. Indeed he was among those who went astray. [86] And do not put me to disgrace on the Day when all will be raised to life, [87] the Day when neither wealth will be of any use (to any one) nor sons, [88] except to one who will come to Allah with a sound heart, [89] and the Paradise will be brought near to the God-fearing [90] and the Hell will be fully uncovered for the perverse, [91] and it will be said to them, 'Where is that which you used to worship [92] beside Allah? Can they help you or help themselves?' [93] So they (their false gods) will be thrown on their faces into it - they and the erring people [94] and the

entire army of Iblīs, all together. [95] They will say when they will be quarreling with each other, [96] 'By Allah, we were in open error [97] when we used to equate you with the Lord of the worlds, [98] and none misguided us except the sinners. [99] Now we have neither any intercessors [100] nor any true friend. [101] Would that we have a chance to return whereby we become among the believers!'" [102]

Surely, in this there is a sign, [103] and most of them are not to believe. And your Lord is the Mighty, the Merciful. [104]

Commentary

وَأَجْعَلْ لِّي لِسَانَ صِدْقٍ فِي الْآخِرِينَ

And destine for me a truthful description among the next generations. (26:84)

The word لِسَان (*lisān*, which literally means tongue) is used in this verse in the sense of description and 'for me' means 'for my benefit. Thus meaning of the prayer is 'O Allah, grant me such delectable ways and nice signs that others may follow until the Dooms Day, and they remember me with good words and nice attributes'. (Ibn Kathīr and Rūḥ al-Ma‘ānī) Allah Ta‘ālā has accepted the supplication of Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام. All, including Jews, Christians and even the disbelievers of Makkah, have feelings of love and affection for the creed of Ibrāhīm عليه السلام, and attribute themselves to it. Although their ways are in conflict with those of Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام, based on infidelity and polytheism, but they claim to be following his ways. As for the Ummah of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, they rightly claim to be on the ways of Ibrāhīm عليه السلام, and feel proud of it.

Love for being praised is contemptible but allowed with certain conditions

Love and aspiration for being praised and respected by others is contemptible under Islamic law. The Holy Qur‘ān has made the bounties of the Hereafter dependent on desisting from the love for being praised by saying تِلْكَ الدَّارُ الْآخِرَةُ نَجْعَلُهَا لِلَّذِينَ لَا يُرِيدُونَ عُلُوًّا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا فَسَادًا (As for that Ultimate Abode (the Hereafter) We assign it to those who intend neither being high on earth nor mischief - 28:83) In the present verse (84) the supplication of Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام for his praise and eulogy by the

coming generations apparently looks like a wish for being praised. But if the wordings of the verse are examined carefully, it would become quite evident that it was not the love for being praised, but the real purpose of the supplication was to invoke the Divine help for performing such righteous deeds which could help him in the Hereafter. Moreover, others should also get attracted towards the righteous deeds by following his example, and so should the posterity. By declaring the love for being praised as unlawful and contemptible the Holy Qur’ān and hadith actually meant the love for mundane position of importance and profit which is not the case in the prayer of Ibrāhīm عليه السلام .

Imām Tirmidhī and Nasa’ī have related on the authority of Sayyidnā Ka’b ibn Mālīk رضي الله عنه that Holy Prophet ﷺ once said that ‘If two hungry wolves are let loose in a herd of goats, they would not do so much damage to the herd as two traits damage the faith of a man. One is the love for wealth and the other is the aspiration for being praised and respected’. (Ṭabrānī from Abū Sa‘īd al-Khudrī, and Bazzār from Abū Hurairah).

Dailamī has reproduced a narration on the authority of Sayyidnā Ibn ‘Abbās رضي الله عنه with a weak chain of narrators that the love for praise and worldly status makes a man blind and deaf. All these aḥadīth refer to the love that has mundane considerations, or for which one has to indulge in sin or negligence in the matter of faith. When this is not the case, aspiration for praise and high position is not contemptible. It is reported in a ḥadīth that Holy Prophet ﷺ himself had made the following supplication: اللَّهُمَّ اجْعَلْنِي فِي عَيْنِي صَغِيرًا وَفِي عَيْنِ النَّاسِ كَبِيرًا that is “Ya Allah, make me insignificant and disdain in my own sight, but make me great in the eyes of people”. Here also the purpose of making great in the eyes of people is that people emulate him in his righteous deeds. That is why Imām Mālīk رحمه الله تعالى has said that the one who is in fact virtuous and pious is required only to avoid making deliberate efforts to present himself as pious in the eyes of people, otherwise, if he loves to be praised by people, it is not contemptible.

Ibn ‘Arabī has said that it is evident from this verse that the desire for a righteous deed which results in people’s praise is allowed. Imām Ghazzālī رحمه الله تعالى has ruled that the love for being praised and the position of respect is permissible under three conditions. One, when the object is not to proclaim oneself as superior to others and to degrade them

to an insignificant position, but for the benefit in the Hereafter, so that others may be influenced to follow his example and try to emulate him. Second, when the object is not to earn false praise against a trait one does not possess, and desire that people should eulogize him for that. Third, when one does not have to indulge in a sin or negligence in the matter of faith in order to achieve it.

Supplication for the absolution of disbelievers is not allowed

وَاعْفُرْ لِأَبِي إِنَّهُ كَانَ مِنَ الضَّالِّينَ ﴿٨٦﴾

And forgive my father. Indeed he was among those who went astray. (26:86)

This prayer of Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام seems to be against the following verse:

مَا كَانَ لِلنَّبِيِّ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَنْ يَسْتَغْفِرُوا لِلْمُشْرِكِينَ وَلَوْ كَانُوا أُولَىٰ قُرْبَىٰ مِنْكُمْ بَعْدَ مَا بَيَّنَّ لَهُمْ أَنَّهُمْ أَصْحَابُ الْجَحِيمِ .

“It is not for the Prophet and the believers to seek forgiveness for the Mushriks, even if they are kinsmen, after it became clear to them that they are the people of hell. (9:113)

This verse clearly lays down the rule that it is not allowed for a Muslim to pray for the forgiveness of the one about whom it is certainly known that he died in the state of *kufr*.

Now the question arises here as to why did Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام supplicate for the forgiveness of his father, who was a disbeliever? Allah Ta‘ālā himself has given answer to this question in the Holy Qur‘ān:

وَمَا كَانَ اسْتِغْفَارُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ لِأَبِيهِ إِلَّا عَنْ مَوْعِدَةٍ وَعَدََهَا إِيَّاهُ ۖ فَلَمَّا تَبَيَّنَ لَهُ أَنَّهُ عَدُوٌّ لِلَّهِ تَبَرَّأَ مِنْهُ ۚ إِنَّ إِبْرَاهِيمَ لَأَوَّاهٌ حَلِيمٌ .

And the prayer of Ibrāhīm for the forgiveness of his father was not but due to a promise he had made to him. Later when it became clear to him that he was an enemy of Allah, he withdrew himself from him. Surely, Ibrāhīm is oft-sighing (before Allah), forbearing. (9:114)

The gist of the answer is that Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام had supplicated for the pardon of his father within his lifetime with the intent and desire

that Allah Ta'ālā would give him Divine help to turn to faith, after which the forgiveness was sure. Alternatively, Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام was of the opinion that his father had accepted the faith, but had not made it public. But once he learnt that his father had died as an infidel, he pronounced his complete disgust against his attitude and disowned it.

Note

The point whether Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام had become aware of the infidelity of his father within his lifetime or came to know about it after his death, or he would know this on the Dooms Day, is fully discussed in Sūrah Taubah.

يَوْمَ لَا يَنْفَعُ مَالٌ وَلَا بَنُونَ ﴿٨٨﴾ إِلَّا مَنْ آتَى اللَّهَ بِقَلْبٍ سَلِيمٍ ﴿٨٩﴾

The Day when neither wealth will be of any use (to any one) nor sons, [88] except to one who will come to Allah with a sound heart, [26:89]

This verse has declared that wealth and children will not be of any help to a person on the Day of Judgment. This declaration is subjected to exception in the words, "except to one who will come to Allah with sound heart". (coming with sound heart means to come to Him with true faith). Now, this exception has been interpreted in two different ways. According to one interpretation adopted by some commentators this exception is not meant to exclude the believers from the rule. It is an exception of a special type which is known in Arabic grammar as "*munqaṭi*" (This type of exception does not exclude anything from the aforementioned statement. It simply says that the thing negated in the first sentence is found in someone else.) A simple example for this expression is that a person is asked about Zaid whether he has some wealth and children, and he replies, "No, his wealth and children are nothing but his sound heart." The same expression is used in this verse. The gist of the verse, according to this interpretation would be that wealth and children will not be helpful to anyone, neither to a believer nor to a disbeliever; what will be helpful, instead of wealth and children, is one's sound heart, i.e. the true faith and righteous deeds.

The second interpretation, adopted by the majority, is that it is a normal exception which means that wealth and children may be helpful

to the one who will come to Allah with sound heart, i.e. with faith and righteous deeds, but these things will not be of any use to a disbeliever.

Another point worth noting in this verse is that while referring to 'children' the Holy Qur'ān has used the word بَنُونَ (Banūn) which is literally restricted to the male children. Probably the reason is that it is the male children from whom an effective help is expected in adverse situations. The expectation of help from female children in some calamities is very rare even in this world. Therefore, the male children are specifically mentioned in the context of the Hereafter to indicate that even those who were expected to help in the world will not be of any use there.

It may also be noted that "sound heart" literally means a healthy heart. But according to Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه here it means that heart of a believer that testifies the Oneness of Allah and is pure from *shirk*. The same interpretation is reported from Mujāhid, Ḥasan al-Baṣrī and Sa'īd ibn al-Musayyab رحمهم الله تعالى with different expressions. Sa'īd ibn al-Musayyab رحمهم الله تعالى says that the sound heart is only that of a believer because the heart of a disbeliever is sick. The Holy Qur'ān says, فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ مَرَضٌ (In their heart there is a malady (2:10)).

Wealth, children and the family relationship can also be beneficial in the Hereafter to a believer

In accordance with the commonly adopted explanation of the verse it has now become clear that the wealth of a person could be of help to him on the Dooms Day, provided he is a Muslim. It can be elaborated by saying that the one who has spent his wealth in this world in the way of Allah and in the cause of righteous deeds or has spent in an ongoing charity (Ṣadaqah Jariyah), will get its benefit in the Hereafter if he dies with the faith of Islam and is listed as a believer on the Day of Judgment. On the other hand if he was not a Muslim or God-forbid became an apostate before his death, then all the good deeds he had done in this world will be of no benefit to him. The same rule will apply in the case of children, that is, if a person is Muslim, he can benefit from them in the Hereafter in that his children supplicate for his forgiveness after his death. Also, if he had tried to train the children to be pious, whatever good they will do, its benefit will also be passed on to him as long as they do righteous deeds. It is also possible that his pious children obtain his pardon in the Hereafter by intercession. In a few Āḥādīth it is reported

about such an intercession and its acceptance, especially the intercession of the young children yet to attain puberty. Likewise, the children will also benefit from their parents on the condition of faith in that if they were Muslims but their righteous deeds could not attain the level of their parents, then Allah Ta'ālā by taking into account their parents good deeds would place them also at the high position of their parents. The Holy Qur'ān has elucidated it in these words وَالْحَقْنَا بِهِمْ ذُرِّيَّتَهُمْ (52:21) that is 'We will join together with Our righteous servants their progeny'. The above quoted famous explanation of this verse has made it clear that wherever it is mentioned in the Qur'ān or hadith that the family connection will be of no avail in the Hereafter, the reference is to the non-believers. This principle is applicable to the extent that even if the wife and children of the messenger are not believers, they too would not benefit from his prophethood in the Hereafter, as is the case of the son of Sayyidnā Nūḥ عليه السلام the wife of Lūṭ عليه السلام and the father of Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام. The Qur'ānic verses "فَإِذَا نُفِخَ فِي الصُّورِ فَلَا أَنْسَابَ بَيْنَهُمْ" "Thereafter, when the Ṣūr (the trumpet) is blown, there are no ties of kinship between them" (23:101) and يَوْمَ يَفِرُّ الْمَرْءُ مِنْ أَخِيهِ وَأُمِّهِ وَأَبِيهِ (upon the day when a man shall flee from his brother, his mother, his father - 80:34) and لَا يَجْزِي وَالِدٌ عَنْ وَلَدِهِ (nor will a son be standing for his father in any way" (31:33) all reflect this very theme. (وَاللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ)

Verses 105 - 122

كَذَّبَتْ قَوْمُ نُوحٍ الْمُرْسَلِينَ ﴿١٠٥﴾ إِذْ قَالَ لَهُمُ أَخُوهُمْ نُوحٌ أَلَا
تَتَّقُونَ ﴿١٠٦﴾ إِنِّي لَكُمْ رَسُولٌ أَمِينٌ ﴿١٠٧﴾ فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا
﴿١٠٨﴾ وَمَا أَسْأَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ مِنْ أَجْرٍ ۖ إِنْ أَجْرِيَ إِلَّا عَلَى رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ
﴿١٠٩﴾ فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا ﴿١١٠﴾ قَالُوا أَتُؤْمِنُ لَكَ وَاتَّبَعَكَ
الْأَرْذَلُونَ ﴿١١١﴾ قَالَ وَمَا عَلِمِي بِمَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١١٢﴾ إِنْ
حِسَابُهُمْ إِلَّا عَلَى رَبِّي لَوْ تَشْعُرُونَ ﴿١١٣﴾ وَمَا أَنَا بِطَارِدِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ
﴿١١٤﴾ إِنْ أَنَا إِلَّا نَذِيرٌ مُبِينٌ ﴿١١٥﴾ قَالُوا لَئِنْ لَمْ تَنْتَهِ يَنُوحُ لَتَكُونَنَّ
مِنَ الْمَرْجُومِينَ ﴿١١٦﴾ قَالَ رَبِّ إِنَّ قَوْمِي كَذَّبُونِ ﴿١١٧﴾ فَافْتَحْ

بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَهُمْ فَتْحًا وَ نَجِّنِي وَمَنْ مَعِيَ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١١٨﴾
 فَانجِنُهُ وَمَنْ مَعَهُ فِي الْفُلْكِ الْمَشْحُونِ ﴿١١٩﴾ ثُمَّ أَغْرَقْنَا بَعْدَ
 الْبَاقِينَ ﴿١٢٠﴾ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَةً ۖ وَمَا كَانَ أَكْثَرُهُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٢١﴾
 وَإِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الرَّحِيمُ ﴿١٢٢﴾

And the people of Nūḥ belied the messengers [105] when their brother Nūḥ said to them, "Do you not fear Allah? [106] I am an honest messenger for you. [107] So, fear Allah and obey me. [108] And I do not claim from you any reward for it. My reward is with none but with the Lord of the worlds; [109] so, fear Allah and obey me." [110] They said, "Shall we believe in you while you are followed by the lowest people?" [111] He said, "I do not know about what they do; [112] their account is with none but with my Lord, if you have sense. [113] And I am not to drive the believers away; [114] I am not but a plain warner." [115] They said, "Should you not stop, O Nūḥ, you will surely be among those stoned." [116] He said, "My Lord, my people have belied me. [117] So judge between me and them with an open verdict and save me and all the believers who are with me." [118] 'So We saved him and those with him in the Ark that was fully occupied. [119] Then We drowned, after that, all the remaining. [120] Surely in this there is a sign, and most of them are not to believe. [121] And surely your Lord is the Mighty, the Merciful. [122]

Commentary

وَمَا أَسْأَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ مِنْ أَجْرٍ

And I do not claim from you any reward for it. - 26:109

It is learnt from this verse that charging and acceptance of wages against religious teachings and preaching is not right. Therefore, the righteous elders have ruled it as forbidden, but the later generations have allowed it under compelling circumstances. Its full details have been given under the explanation of the verse لَا تَشْتَرُوا بِآيَاتِي ثَمَنًا قَلِيلًا "And do not take a paltry price for My signs" - 2:41.

Special note

Here the verse فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا (So, fear Allah and obey me - 110) is repeated twice to make clear that for the obedience of the Messenger and fear of Allah it was enough that the prophet has any one of the two qualities: One, his honesty and integrity, and the second, his teaching and preaching without a fee. But when the Messenger who is personified of all these traits, his obedience and the fear of his God becomes all the more necessary.

Nobility of a person depends on deeds and moral qualities and not on family or status

قَالُوا أَنْتُمْ لَكُمْ وَاتَّبَعَكَ الْآرْذَلُونَ. قَالَ وَمَا عَلِمِي بِمَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ.

They said, "Shall we believe in you while you are followed by the lowest people?" [111] He said, "I do not know about what they do. (26:111-112)

It is related in this verse that the disbelievers rejected the invitation of Sayyidnā Nūḥ عليه السلام to accept the faith on the plea that his followers were worthless poor people. So, how could they, the elite and noble, mix up with them? On this Nūḥ عليه السلام replied that he did not know about their acts, thereby hinting that their understanding of nobility on the basis of family background, wealth, or status was wrong, and that the nobility or meanness and honour or disgrace is dependent on one's deeds and morals. Hence, it was their ignorance to put the label of sordidness on his followers, because they did not know about their deeds and disposition. Unless one knows fully well about the morals and deeds of others, it is not right to pass any judgment about them. (Qurṭubī).

Verses 123 - 140

كَذَّبَتْ عَادُ الْمُرْسَلِينَ ﴿١٢٣﴾ إِذْ قَالَ لَهُمُ أَخُوهُمْ هُودٌ أَلَا تَتَّقُونَ ﴿١٢٤﴾ إِنِّي لَكُمْ رَسُولٌ أَمِينٌ ﴿١٢٥﴾ فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا ﴿١٢٦﴾ وَمَا أَسْأَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ مِنْ أَجْرٍ إِنْ أَجْرِيَ إِلَّا عَلَى رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿١٢٧﴾ أَتَبْنُونَ بِكُلِّ رِيعٍ آيَةً تَعْبَثُونَ ﴿١٢٨﴾ وَتَتَّخِذُونَ مَصَانِعَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَخْلُدُونَ ﴿١٢٩﴾ وَإِذَا بَطِشْتُمْ بَطِشْتُمْ جَبَارِينَ ﴿١٣٠﴾ فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ

وَأَطِيعُوا^{١٣١} وَاتَّقُوا^{١٣٢} الَّذِي أَمَدَّكُمْ بِمَا تَعْلَمُونَ^{١٣٣} أَمَدَّكُمْ^{١٣٤}
 بِأَنْعَامٍ وَبَيْنَ^{١٣٥} وَجَنَّتِ^{١٣٦} وَعُيُونٍ^{١٣٧} إِنِّي^{١٣٨} أَخَافُ عَلَيْكُمْ^{١٣٩}
 عَذَابَ يَوْمٍ عَظِيمٍ^{١٤٠} قَالُوا سَوَاءٌ عَلَيْنَا أَوَعَظْتَ أَمْ لَمْ تَكُنْ مِنَ^{١٤١}
 الْوَاعِظِينَ^{١٤٢} إِنَّ هَذَا إِلَّا خُلُقُ الْأَوَّلِينَ^{١٤٣} وَمَا نَحْنُ^{١٤٤}
 بِمُعَذِّبِينَ^{١٤٥} فَكَذَّبُوهُ فَاهْلُكْنَهُمْ^{١٤٦} إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَةً^{١٤٧} وَمَا كَانَ^{١٤٨}
 أَكْثَرَهُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ^{١٤٩} وَإِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الرَّحِيمُ^{١٥٠}

The (people of) ‘Ad belied the messengers [123] when their brother Hūd said to them, "Do you not fear Allah? [124] I am an honest messenger for you, [125] so fear Allah and obey me. [126] And I do not claim from you any reward for it. My reward is with none but with the Lord of the worlds. [127] Do you erect on every height a sign, having no sound purpose, [128] and take the objects of architecture as if you are going to live for ever, [129] and when you seize (someone) you seize as tyrants? [130] So fear Allah and obey me. [131] And fear the One who has supported you with what you know. [132] He has supported you with cattle and sons, [133] and with gardens and springs. [134] In fact I fear for you the punishment of a great day." [135]

They said, "It is all equal for us, whether you give us advice or you are not among those who give advice. [135] This is nothing but the practice of the ancient, [137] and we are not going to be punished." [138] Thus they belied him, so We destroyed them. Surely, in this there is a sign, and most of them are not to believe. [139] And surely your Lord is the Mighty, the Merciful. [140]

Commentary

Explanation of some difficult words

اتَّبَعُوا بِكُلِّ رِيعٍ آيَةً تَعْبَثُونَ. وَتَتَّخِذُونَ مَصَانِعَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَخْلُدُونَ.

Do you erect on every height a sign having no sound purpose, [128] and take the objects of architecture as if you are going to live for ever, (26:128-129)

Ibn Jarīr رحمه الله تعالى has related from Mujāhid رحمه الله تعالى that the passage between two hills is called *Rī’* (رِيع). But Sayyidnā Ibn ‘Abbās رحمه الله and majority have taken the meaning of *Rī’* as a high place, and its derivative is *rī’-un-na bāt* (رِيعِ النَّبَاتِ), which means growing and climbing vegetation. Literal meaning of ‘Āyah (آيَة) is symbol or sign, but here it means a high palace. *ta‘būn* is derived from ‘*abath* (عَبَثَ), which is something of no value and benefit neither in reality nor by implication. So, the meaning of the verse is that they used to make very high palaces of no benefit and which they did not need. It was just to fulfill their ego and pride. *maṣānī’* (مَصَانِعَ) is the plural of *Maṣna’* (مَصْنَعٌ). Sayyidnā Qatādah has taken *maṣānī’* (مَصَانِعَ) for the water tank, whereas Ḥaḍrat Mujāhid رحمه الله تعالى take it to mean strong palace.

la‘allā (لَعَلَّ) (as if you are going to live for ever) Imām al-Bukhārī رحمه الله has commented in Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī that the word *la‘allā* (لَعَلَّ) in the verse is used as a word of simile, and that Sayyidnā Ibn ‘Abbās رحمه الله has translated it as *ka‘annakum taḥlūn* that is ‘as if you are..’. (Rūḥ al-Ma‘ānī)

Construction of buildings without any need is contemptible

This verse indicates that the construction of houses and buildings without need is a condemnable act. The *ḥadīth* quoted by Imām Tirmidhī on the authority of Sayyidnā ‘Anas رحمه الله conveys exactly the same message: *النفقة كلها في سبيل الله إلا البناء فلا خير فيه* (All spendings are in Allah's way, except construction, which has no merit). It means that the building which is constructed in excess of requirement has no benefit or virtue. Another narration of Sayyidnā Anas رحمه الله also confirms this: *إن كل بناء وبال على صاحبه إلا ما لا بد منه* - ‘Every building is a tribulation for the builder, except that which is necessary, because it is not a nuisance’. It is commented in Rūḥ al-Ma‘ānī that without genuine requirement construction of tall buildings is contemptible and condemned under the Shari‘ah of the Holy Prophet ﷺ.

Verses 141 - 159

كَذَّبَتْ ثَمُودُ الْمُرْسَلِينَ ﴿١٤١﴾ إِذْ قَالَ لَهُمُ أَخُوهُمْ ضَلِحُ الْأَتَقُونَ ﴿١٤٢﴾ إِنِّي لَكُمْ رَسُولٌ أَمِينٌ ﴿١٤٣﴾ فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا ﴿١٤٤﴾

وَمَا أَسْأَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ مِنْ أَجْرٍ ۚ إِنْ أَجْرِيَ إِلَّا عَلَى رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿١٤٥﴾ أَتُتْرَكُونَ فِي مَا هَاهُنَا آمِنِينَ ﴿١٤٦﴾ فِي جَنَّتٍ وَعَيْوُنٍ ﴿١٤٧﴾ وَزُرُوعٍ وَنَخْلٍ طَلْعُهَا هَضِيمٌ ﴿١٤٨﴾ وَتَنْجِتُونَ مِنَ الْجِبَالِ بُيُوتًا فَرَهِينَ ﴿١٤٩﴾ فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا ۖ وَلَا تُطِيعُوا أَمْرَ الْمُسْرِفِينَ ﴿١٥١﴾ الَّذِينَ يُفْسِدُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا يُصْلِحُونَ ﴿١٥٢﴾ قَالُوا إِنَّمَا أَنْتَ مِنَ الْمُسَحَّرِينَ ﴿١٥٣﴾ مَا أَنْتَ إِلَّا بَشَرٌ مِثْلُنَا ۖ فَأْتِ بَآيَةٍ إِنْ كُنْتَ مِنَ الصَّادِقِينَ ﴿١٥٤﴾ قَالَ هَذِهِ نَاقَةٌ لَهَا شِرْبٌ وَلَكُمْ شِرْبُ يَوْمٍ مَعْلُومٍ ﴿١٥٥﴾ وَلَا تَمْسُوهَا بِسُوءٍ فَيَأْخُذَكُمْ عَذَابٌ يَوْمٍ عَظِيمٍ ﴿١٥٦﴾ فَعَقَرُوهَا فَاصْبَحُوا نَدِمِينَ ﴿١٥٧﴾ فَأَخَذَهُمُ الْعَذَابُ ۖ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَةً ۖ وَمَا كَانَ أَكْثَرُهُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٥٨﴾ وَإِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الرَّحِيمُ ﴿١٥٩﴾

The (people of) Thamūd belied the messengers [141] when their brother Šālīh said to them, "Do you not fear Allah? [142] I am an honest messenger for you. [143] So, fear Allah and obey me. [144] And I do not claim from you any reward for it. My reward is with none but with the Lord of the worlds. [145] Will you be left secure in whatever is here, [146] in gardens and springs, [147] and in farms and date-palms, the spathes of which are interwoven? [148] And you hew out houses from the hills with pride. [149] So fear Allah and obey me, [150] and do not obey the order of the transgressors [151] make mischief on the land and who do not set things right". [152]

They said, "You are merely one of those bewitched. [153] You are nothing but a human like us. So, bring a sign if you are one of the truthful." [154] He said, "This is a she-camel - She has a share of water, and you have a share of water on a specified day. [155] So do not touch her with evil (intent), lest you should be seized by a painful punishment." [156] But they killed her, then they

became remorseful and the punishment seized them. Surely in this there is a sign, and most of them are not to believe. [158] And surely, your Lord is the Mighty, the Merciful. [159]

Commentary

وَتَنْجُتُونَ مِنَ الْجِبَالِ بُيُوتًا فَارِهِينَ ﴿١٤٩﴾

And you hew out houses from the hills with pride. [149]

According to Sayyidnā Ibn ‘Abbās رضي الله عنه, the word فَارِهِينَ (Fārihīn) means arrogant and conceited people. But Abū Ṣāliḥ and Imām Raghīb have taken this word to mean experts. Therefore, the meaning of the verse is that Allah Ta‘ālā has favoured you by teaching such skills that you could make houses by cutting hills. The essence of all this is that you should remember the bounties of Allah Ta‘ālā and should not make mischief and trouble on earth.

Useful vocations are Divine Graces provided they are not employed in bad things

This verse indicates that nice vocations are Allah’s Graces, and to draw benefit from them is lawful. But if they are used for some sinful purpose or in an unlawful act, or if someone gets involved in them with unnecessary concentration, then it is not lawful to adopt them. An example of unnecessary construction of tall buildings and its contempt has just been mentioned in the previous verses.

Verses 160 - 175

كَذَّبَتْ قَوْمُ لُوطٍ بِالْمُرْسَلِينَ ﴿١٦٠﴾ إِذْ قَالَ لَهُمُ أَخُوهُمْ لُوطُ أَلَا تَتَّقُونَ ﴿١٦١﴾ إِنِّي لَكُمْ رَسُولٌ أَمِينٌ ﴿١٦٢﴾ فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا أَمْرَ اللَّهِ وَمَا أَسْأَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ مِنْ أَجْرٍ ۚ إِنْ أَجْرِيَ إِلَّا عَلَى رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿١٦٤﴾ أَتَأْتُونَ الذُّكْرَانَ مِنَ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿١٦٥﴾ وَتَذَرُونَ مَا خَلَقَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ ۖ بَلْ أَنْتُمْ قَوْمٌ عَادُونَ ﴿١٦٦﴾ قَالُوا لَئِنْ لَمْ تَنْتَهِ يَلُوطُ لَتَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْمُخْرَجِينَ ﴿١٦٧﴾ قَالَ إِنِّي

لَعَمَلِكُمْ مِّنَ الْقَالِينَ ﴿١٦٨﴾ رَبِّ نَجِّنِي وَاهْلِي مِمَّا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٦٩﴾
 فَجَجْنَاهُ وَاهْلَاهُ أَجْمَعِينَ ﴿١٧٠﴾ إِلَّا عَجُوزًا فِي الْغَابِرِينَ ﴿١٧١﴾ ثُمَّ
 دَمَرْنَا الْآخَرِينَ ﴿١٧٢﴾ وَأَمْطَرْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ مَطَرًا ۖ فَسَاءَ مَطَرُ الْمُنْذَرِينَ
 ﴿١٧٣﴾ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَةً ۖ وَمَا كَانَ أَكْثَرُهُمْ مُّؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٧٤﴾ وَإِنَّ
 رَبَّكَ لَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الرَّحِيمُ ﴿١٧٥﴾

The people of Lūṭ belied the messengers [160] when their brother Lūṭ said to them, "Do you not fear Allah? [161] I am an honest messenger for you. [162] So fear Allah and obey me. [163] And I do not claim from you any reward for it. My reward is with none but with the Lord of the worlds. [164] Do you go to the males(for having sex) out of the whole universe, [165] and leave what your Lord has created for you, that is, your wives? in fact, you are a people who cross (all) limits." [166]

They said, "If you do not stop O Lūṭ, you shall be included among the outcast." [167] He said "Certainly, I am hateful to your act. [168] O my Lord, save me and my family from what they do." [169] So We saved him and his family, all of them [170] except an old woman among those who remained behind. [171] Then We destroyed the others, [172] and subjected them to a terrible rain. So evil was the rain of those who were warned. [173] Surely, in this there is a sign, but most of them are not to believe. [174] And surely your Lord is the Mighty, the Merciful. [175]

Commentary

Unnatural act is unlawful even with one's own wife

وَتَذَرُونَ مَا خَلَقَ لَكُمْ رَبُّكُمْ مِنْ أَزْوَاجِكُمْ

And leave what your Lord has created for you, that is, your wives? - 26:166

In the phrase مِنْ أَزْوَاجِكُمْ the word مِنْ (*min*) *Min* could be descriptive (which is translated above as 'that is') if taken in the technical sense, which would mean that in order to satisfy your lust you go after the homosexual men instead of your wives, whom Allah has given you to

meet your natural urge. This is indeed a proof of malignity. The other possibility is that the letter '*Min*' is used to mean 'from' or 'out of'; then the meaning of the verse would be that it is a special part in the body of your wives which is created for the satisfaction of your natural urge. But you indulge in unnatural act with them, which is totally unlawful. Thus according to this second interpretation, it has also been made clear that it is not permitted to have unnatural intercourse with one's wife. In a *ḥadīth* Holy Prophet ﷺ has cast curse on such a person. نعوذ بالله منه (Rūḥ al-Ma'ānī).

إِلَّا عَجُوزًا فِي الْغَيْرِينَ

Except an old woman among those who remained behind. -
26:171

The word 'old woman' is used for the wife of Sayyidnā Lūṭ عليه السلام, who was an infidel and was agreeable to the unnatural act of the people of Lūṭ عليه السلام. If the wife of Lūṭ عليه السلام was an old woman then the use of this word for her is quite clear, but if she was not old, then perhaps she was called 'old woman' for the reason that the prophet's wife is regarded like the mother of the Ummah, and to call a woman having many children as old is not unlikely.

وَأَمْطَرْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ مَطَرًا ۖ فَسَاءَ مَطَرُ الْمُنْذَرِينَ

and subjected them to a terrible rain. So evil was the rain of those who were warned. - 26:173

This verse has confirmed that if a man commits sodomy, he may be punished with throwing a wall on him or by throwing him down from a high place, as suggested by Ḥanafī scholars, because the people of Lūṭ عليه السلام were destroyed in a similar manner. Their township was lifted and thrown on the ground. (Shāmī Kitāb Al-Ḥudūd)

Verses 176 - 191

كَذَّبَ أَصْحَابُ لَيْكَةِ الْمُرْسَلِينَ ﴿١٧٦﴾ إِذْ قَالَ لَهُمُ شُعَيْبٌ أَلَا تَتَّقُونَ ﴿١٧٧﴾ إِنِّي لَكُمْ رَسُولٌ أَمِينٌ ﴿١٧٨﴾ فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا

﴿١٧٩﴾ وَمَا أَسْأَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ مِنْ أَجْرٍ ۚ إِنْ أَجْرِيَ إِلَّا عَلَىٰ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿١٨٠﴾ أَوْفُوا الْكَيْلَ وَلَا تَكُونُوا مِنَ الْمُخْسِرِينَ ﴿١٨١﴾ وَزِنُوا بِالْقِسْطَاسِ الْمُسْتَقِيمِ ﴿١٨٢﴾ وَلَا تَبْخُسُوا النَّاسَ أَشْيَاءَهُمْ وَلَا تَعْتُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ مُفْسِدِينَ ﴿١٨٣﴾ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ وَالْجِبِلَّةَ الْأُولَىٰ ﴿١٨٤﴾ قَالُوا إِنَّمَا أَنْتَ مِنَ الْمُسَحَّرِينَ ﴿١٨٥﴾ وَمَا أَنْتَ إِلَّا بَشَرٌ مِّثْلُنَا وَإِنْ نَظُنُّكَ لَمِنَ الْكَاذِبِينَ ﴿١٨٦﴾ فَاسْقِطْ عَلَيْنَا كِسْفًا مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ إِنْ كُنْتَ مِنَ الصَّادِقِينَ ﴿١٨٧﴾ قَالَ رَبِّيَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٨٨﴾ فَكَذَّبُوهُ فَآخَذَهُمْ عَذَابُ يَوْمِ الظُّلَّةِ ۖ إِنَّهُ كَانَ عَذَابَ يَوْمٍ عَظِيمٍ ﴿١٨٩﴾ إِنَّ فِي ذَٰلِكَ لَآيَةً ۖ وَمَا كَانَ أَكْثَرُهُمْ مُّؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٩٠﴾ وَإِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الرَّحِيمُ ﴿١٩١﴾

The people of Aykah belied the messengers [176] when Shu'aib said to them, "Do you not fear Allah? [177] I am an honest messenger for you. [178] So fear Allah and obey me. [179] And I do not claim from you any reward for it; my reward is with none but with the Lord of the worlds. [180] Give full measure and do not be among those who bring loss to others. [181] And weigh with an even balance. [182] And do not make people short of their things and do not spread disorder in the land as mischief makers. [183] And be fearful of the One who created you and the former generations." [184]

They said, "You are but one of the bewitched men. [185] And you are no more than a human like us, and in fact we consider you to be one of the liars. [186] So cause a piece from the sky to fall down upon us, if you are one of the truthful." [187] He said, "My Lord knows best what you do." [188] Thus they belied him, so they were seized by the torment of the Day of Canopy. Indeed it was the punishment of a terrible day. [189] Surely in this there is a sign, but most of them are not to believe. [190] And surely your Lord is the Mighty, the Merciful. [191]

Commentary

وَزِنُوا بِالْقِسْطَاسِ الْمُسْتَقِيمِ

And weigh with an even balance. - 26:182

Some scholars have held the word *Quisṭās* as a Roman word, which means justice, while others have taken it as an Arabic word, derived from *Qist*, which is also used for justice. It means to make use of the scale and other measuring tools in a straight and correct manner, where there is no possibility of weighing less.

وَلَا تَبْخَسُوا النَّاسَ أَشْيَاءَهُمْ

And do not make people short of their things - 26:183

What it means is that it is unlawful to reduce any quantity or amount from that which has been contracted with anyone, whether it is a measurable thing or otherwise. Therefore, if a servant or a laborer does not work his full time at his workplace, he too is included in this warning. Imām Malik رحمه الله تعالى has reported a narration in his *Muwatta’a* that Sayyidnā ‘Umar رضي الله عنه noticed that someone did not join in the ‘Aṣr prayer. So, he enquired about the reason for that, to which he offered some excuse. Then Sayyidnā ‘Umar رضي الله عنه said, طَفَفْتَ ‘You have reduced in measuring’. As prayer is not something to be measured, hence after quoting this ḥadīth Imām Malik رحمه الله تعالى has said that this command is not restricted to measurable things. Rather, performing any obligation less than due is included in prohibition highlighted in this verse and in Sūrah "At-taṭfīf 84".

فَاَخَذَهُمْ عَذَابُ يَوْمِ الظُّلَّةِ

so they were seized by the torment of the Day of Canopy. -
26:189

عَذَابُ يَوْمِ الظُّلَّةِ (the Torment of the Canopy), mentioned in this verse refers to an incident, which is this: Allah Ta‘ālā sent down such an extreme heat on a people that they could not find comfort either inside the houses or outside. Then He sent down a mass of dark cloud over a nearby forest, under which there was a cool breeze. As the entire people were distressed due to excessive heat, they ran to take shelter under the cloud. When all of them assembled under the cover of the cloud, it rained fire

instead of water. Thus the whole nation was burnt to ashes. (Rūḥ al-Ma'ānī)

Verses 192 - 227

وَأَنَّهُ لَنَزَّلِ رَبُّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿١٩٢﴾ نَزَلَ بِهِ الرُّوحُ الْأَمِينُ ﴿١٩٣﴾
 عَلَى قَلْبِكَ لِتَكُونَ مِنَ الْمُنذِرِينَ ﴿١٩٤﴾ بِلِسَانٍ عَرَبِيٍّ مُبِينٍ ﴿١٩٥﴾
 وَإِنَّهُ لَفِي زُبُرِ الْأَوَّلِينَ ﴿١٩٦﴾ أَوَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُمْ آيَةٌ أَنْ يَعْلَمَهُ عُلَمَؤُا
 بَنِي إِسْرَءِيلَ ﴿١٩٧﴾ وَلَوْ نَزَّلْنَاهُ عَلَى بَعْضِ الْأَعْجَمِينَ ﴿١٩٨﴾ فَقَرَأَهُ
 عَلَيْهِمْ مَا كَانُوا بِهِ مُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٩٩﴾ كَذَلِكَ سَلَكْنَاهُ فِي قُلُوبِ
 الْمُجْرِمِينَ ﴿٢٠٠﴾ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِهِ حَتَّى يَرُوا الْعَذَابَ الْأَلِيمَ ﴿٢٠١﴾
 فَيَأْتِيَهُمْ بَغْتَةً وَهُمْ لَا يَشْعُرُونَ ﴿٢٠٢﴾ فَيَقُولُوا هَلْ نَحْنُ مُنْظَرُونَ
 ﴿٢٠٣﴾ أَفَبِعَذَابِنَا يَسْتَعْجِلُونَ ﴿٢٠٤﴾ أَفَرَأَيْتَ إِنْ مَتَّعْنَاهُمْ سِنِينَ
 ﴿٢٠٥﴾ ثُمَّ جَاءَهُمْ مَا كَانُوا يُوعَدُونَ ﴿٢٠٦﴾ مَا أَغْنَى عَنْهُمْ مَا
 كَانُوا يُمَتَّعُونَ ﴿٢٠٧﴾ وَمَا أَهْلَكْنَا مِنْ قَرْيَةٍ إِلَّا لَهَا مُنْذِرُونَ ﴿٢٠٨﴾
 ذِكْرَىٰ وَمَا كُنَّا ظَالِمِينَ ﴿٢٠٩﴾ وَمَا نَنْزِلُ بِهِ الشَّيْطَانُ ﴿٢١٠﴾
 وَمَا يَنْبَغِي لَهُمْ وَمَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ ﴿٢١١﴾ إِنَّهُمْ عَنِ السَّمْعِ لَمَعْزُولُونَ
 ﴿٢١٢﴾ فَلَا تَدْعُ مَعَ اللَّهِ إِلَهًا آخَرَ فَتُكُونَ مِنَ الْمُعَذَّبِينَ ﴿٢١٣﴾
 وَأَنْذِرْ عَشِيرَتَكَ الْأَقْرَبِينَ ﴿٢١٤﴾ وَاخْفِضْ جَنَاحَكَ لِمَنِ اتَّبَعَكَ
 مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٢١٥﴾ فَإِنْ عَصَوْكَ فَقُلْ إِنَّي بِرِئَاءٍ مِمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ
 ﴿٢١٦﴾ وَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى الْعَزِيزِ الرَّحِيمِ ﴿٢١٧﴾ الَّذِي يَرِيكَ حِينَ تَقُومُ
 ﴿٢١٨﴾ وَتَقْلُبُكَ فِي السَّجْدِينَ ﴿٢١٩﴾ إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ
 ﴿٢٢٠﴾ هَلْ أَتَيْتُكُمْ عَلَىٰ مَنْ نَزَّلَ الشَّيْطَانُ ﴿٢٢١﴾ نَزَّلَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ
 أَفَّاكٍ أَثِيمٍ ﴿٢٢٢﴾ يُلْقُونَ السَّمْعَ وَأَكْثُرُهُمْ كَذِبُونَ ﴿٢٢٣﴾ وَالشُّعْرَاءُ

يَتَّبِعُهُمُ الْغَاوُونَ ﴿٢٢٤﴾ أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّهُمْ فِي كُلِّ وَادٍ يَهِيمُونَ ﴿٢٢٥﴾
وَأَنَّهُمْ يَقُولُونَ مَا لَا يَفْعَلُونَ ﴿٢٢٦﴾ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا
الصَّالِحَاتِ وَذَكَرُوا اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا وَانْتَصَرُوا مِنْ ء بَعْدَ مَا ظَلَمُوا ۗ
وَسَيَعْلَمُ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا أَيَّ مُنْقَلَبٍ يَنْقَلِبُونَ ﴿٢٢٧﴾

And this (Qur'ān) is the revelation of the Lord of the worlds. [192] It is brought by the Trusted Spirit down [193] to your heart, so that you become one of the warners [194] in plain Arabic language. [195] And of course, it is (mentioned) in the scriptures of the former people. [196]

Is it not a proof for them that the knowledgeable of the children of Isrā'īl recognize him (the prophet)? [197] And (even) if We had revealed it to a non-Arab, [198] and he would have recited it to them, they were not to believe in it. [199] Thus We have made it enter into the hearts of the sinners. [200] They will not believe in it until they will see the painful punishment [201] and it will come to them suddenly while they will not be anticipating (it), [202] and they will say, "Is it (possible) that we are given some respite?" [203] Are they asking then that Our punishment should come soon? [204] So tell me, If We give them enjoyment for years, [205] then comes to them what they are warned of, [206] what help can be provided to them by the things they were given to enjoy? [207] And We did not destroy any town unless it has had warners [208] to give advice, and We have never been unjust. [209]

And this (Qur'ān) is not brought down by the satans. [210] It neither fits them, nor are they able to (do this). [211] In fact they are kept far from hearing (it at the time of revelation). [212] So do not invoke any other god along with Allah, or you will be among those who are to be punished. [213] And warn the nearest people of your clan, [214] and be kind with humbleness to the believers who followed you. [215] So if they disobey you, then say, "I disown what you do," [216] and place your trust in the Mighty, the Merciful, [217] Who sees you when you stand

[218] (in prayer) and (sees) your movement among those who prostrate. [219] Surely, He is the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing. [220]

Shall I tell you on whom the satans descend? [221] They descend on every sinful liar. They give ear to hear (secretly) and most of them tell lies. As for the poets, they are followed by the straying people. Did you not see that they wander in every valley and that they say what they do not do, except those who believe and do righteous deeds and remember Allah very much and defend themselves after they are wronged. And the wrongdoers will soon know to which place they are going to return. [227]

Commentary

Qur'ān is the name of the collection of its words and meanings

نَزَلَ بِهِ الرُّوحُ الْأَمِينُ ﴿١٩٣﴾ عَلَى قَلْبِكَ لِتَكُونَ مِنَ الْمُنذِرِينَ ﴿١٩٤﴾ بِلِسَانٍ عَرَبِيٍّ مُبِينٍ ﴿١٩٥﴾ وَإِنَّهُ لَفِي زُبُرِ الْأَوَّلِينَ ﴿١٩٦﴾

It is brought by the Trusted Spirit down [193] to your heart, so that you become one of the warners [194] in plain Arabic language. [195] And of course, it is (mentioned) in the scriptures of the former people. [196]

The words بِلِسَانٍ عَرَبِيٍّ مُبِينٍ (in plain Arabic language - 195) in these verses makes it clear that Qur'ān is only that which is in Arabic language. Any translation of a passage or the whole of Qur'ān in any language cannot be called Qur'ān. But the next sentence إِنَّهُ لَفِي زُبُرِ الْأَوَّلِينَ (And of course, it is [mentioned] in the scriptures of the former people - 196) does not seem to be in consonance with it, because the pronoun 'it' is apparently refers to the Qur'ān and means that the Qur'ān was also in the earlier scriptures, i.e. in Torah, Injil and Zabūr. It is also well known that the earlier books, namely Torah, Injil and Zabūr, were not in the Arabic language. Hence the inclusion of the meanings of Qur'ān in them is referred in this verse as 'Qur'ān'. Answer to this apparent contradiction is that according to majority of the Ummah, sometimes even the subject matter of the Qur'ān is called Qur'ān in a general sense, because the real purpose of a book is the subjects it deals with. The statement that earlier books also contained Qur'ān is in this sense only that they included some Qur'ānic subjects. This statement is also endorsed by many narrations of *ḥadīth*.

Sayyidnā Maqil ibn Yasar ؓ has reported a Ḥadīth in Mustadrak of Ḥākim that the Holy Prophet ﷺ has said that Sūrah Al-Baqarah was given to him from 'adh-dhikr al-'awwal', and Sūrah Ṭahā, Ṭawāsin طواسين (all Sūrahs starting from Ṭasin طس) and Ḥawāmīm حواميم (all Sūrahs beginning with Ḥāmīm) were given from the tablets of Sayyidnā Mūsā ؑ, while Sūrah Al-Fātiḥah was given to him from under the 'Arsh عرش (the great Throne). Ṭabarānī, Ḥākim, Baihaqī etc. have reported on the authority of Sayyidnā Abdullāh ibn Mas'ūd ؓ that Sūrah Al-Mulk is present in Torah as well. (Al-Ḥadīth). The Sūrah سَبِّحْ اسْمَ رَبِّكَ الْأَعْلَى has itself said, إِنَّ هَذَا لَفِي الصُّحُفِ الْأُولَى صُحُفِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَمُوسَى (87:18,19) that is these subjects have also appeared in the books of Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm and Sayyidnā Mūsā عليهم السلام.

The gist of all these verses and narrations is that many a subjects of the Qur'ān were also covered in the earlier books as well. But it does not mean that those parts of the earlier books in which the Qur'ānic subjects were covered are given the name of Qur'ān. No one in the Ummah is of the opinion that those parts of the earlier books, be called Qur'ān. Instead the majority of Ummah believes that Qur'ān is the name not only of its wordings but also of its meanings. If someone picks up some of the Quranic words from different places and put them together to make a passage like الحمد لله العزيز الرحيم الذى له ملك السموات وهو رب العالمين خالق كل شئ وهو المستعان, it will not be called Qur'ān, despite the fact that all these words are taken from the Qur'ān. Likewise, only the meanings of Qur'ān, irrespective of the language they are rendered in, cannot be regarded as Qur'ān.

Reciting translation of Qur'ān in prayers is not allowed by consensus of Ummah

The whole Ummah is unanimous on the rule that reciting the translation of the Qur'ān in any other language like Urdu, Persian, English etc. is not sufficient for discharging the obligation of recitation in Ṣalāh, except in a case of extreme necessity. The jurists who are reported to have relaxed this rule have, later on, changed their view.

Urdu translation of Qur'ān is not allowed to be called Urdu Qur'ān

If only the translation of the Qur'ān is written in any language without the Arabic text, it cannot be called the Qur'ān. Some people call

the Urdu translation of the Qur’ān as Urdu Qur’ān, or the English translation of the Qur’ān as English Qur’ān. It is not right and amounts to disrespect of the Holy Book. Printing, calling or trading of something in the name of Qur’ān, without the Arabic text of the Qur’ān, is not permitted. This subject is dealt with in detail in my treatise (تحذير الاخوان عن (تغيير رسم القرآن).

أَفَرَأَيْتَ إِنْ مَتَّعْنَاهُمْ سِنِينَ ﴿٢٠٥﴾

So tell me, If We give them enjoyment for years, - 26:205.

There is a hint in this verse that those who are bestowed with long life in this world by Allah Ta‘ālā, it is His grace on them. But those who show ingratitude for this grace and do not submit to Islam, to them this respite and grace will not be of any avail. Imām Zuhri رحمه الله تعالى has related that Sayyidnā ‘Umar ibn ‘Abdul Azīz رحمه الله تعالى used to recite this verse every morning by holding his beard and addressing his Self:

وليلك نوم والردي لك لازم	نهارك يا مغرور سهو و غفلة
ولا انت فى النوم ناج وسالم	فلا انت فى الايقاظ يقظان حازم
كذلك فى الدنيا تعيش البهائم	وتسعى الى ما سوف تكره غبه

‘O the duped one! Your whole day is spent in negligence and the night in sleep, while death is inevitable for you. Neither you are awake among the alert and woken nor are you the one who will get salvation from among the sleepers. You keep endeavoring for things which will soon bring you unpleasant results. Cattle and animals live like this in the world’.

وَأَنْذِرْ عَشِيرَتَكَ الْأَقْرَبِينَ ﴿٢١٤﴾

And warn the nearest people of your clan, -26:214.

‘Ashirah عشيرة means clan and by limiting it with ‘aqrabīn (the nearest people) it is used for close relatives. It is worth noting here that the mission of the Holy Prophet ﷺ as a messenger is universal to the whole Ummah, then what is the wisdom in making it special for the members of the clan? But if we look at it rather closely, we will notice in it an easy and effective way for preaching, which would have far-reaching effect. One’s own family members having the privilege of closeness are also entitled to

have precedence over others on initiating any act of virtue. By virtue of close mutual relations they know each other well and anyone with false claims would get exposed in no time. Conversely, the one having good reputation among the family members would be readily accepted and listened to. Once the close relatives throw their weight to support a good cause, it brings in unity and mutual help between them. This way they develop a group of the family members on the basis of trust and sincerity and it becomes very easy to spend the daily life in an atmosphere of peace to follow the religious code. Then this homogeneous and sincere group works like a small power in preaching and spreading the precepts and code of religion to others. In another verse of the Holy Qur'an it is said قُرْآنًا (66:6) أَنْفُسَكُمْ وَأَهْلِيكُمْ نَارًا that is 'Save yourself and your family members from the fire of Jahannam'. Responsibility of saving one's dependent from the fire of Jahannam is placed on every member of the clan. This is an easy and simple way of reforming the conduct and morals. It is an every day experience that in order to follow good conduct and morals and then to stick to them is only possible when the environment is favourable for that. If only one person in the entire household wishes to perform his prayers regularly, even that devotee will find it difficult to carry it out. In the present environment it has become difficult to abstain from the unlawful things not because it is not possible to keep away from them, but the reason is that when the whole fraternity is involved in a sin, it becomes very difficult for just one person to keep himself aloof. When this verse was revealed to Holy Prophet ﷺ, he called out all the members of the family and conveyed to them the message of truth. Although they did not accept the truth at that time but gradually the family members started converting to Islam. When the uncle of Holy Prophet ﷺ Sayyidnā Hamzah ؓ, converted to Islam it provided great strength to the mission.

وَالشُّعْرَاءُ يَتَّبِعُهُمُ الْغَاوُونَ ﴿٢٢٤﴾

As for the poets, they are followed by the straying people. -
26:224.

شِعْر (Shi'r) which is the origin of Shu'arā' and is translated as poetry; is an Arabic word which lexically means any statement based on imagination and ideas not confirmed by serious proofs. It is not necessary for being a 'Shi'r' in original Arabic to have a particular rhythm or

qāfiyah or *radīf*.

Since the technical *shi‘r* (poetry) which is always based on particular rhythms is generally composed of imaginary thoughts, the technical definition of *shi‘r* (poetry) is "a composition of words having a particular rhythm and a similar sound at the end of each line (*Qāfiyah*)". The pagans of Makkah used to call the Holy Prophet ﷺ a *shā‘ir* (a poet) and the Holy Qur‘ān, a *shi‘r* (poetry). Some commentators of the Holy Qur‘ān are of the view that the pagans of Makkah used to call the Qur‘ān a *shi‘r* in its technical sense. But others are of the opinion that it was not so, because the infidels of Makkah were fully conversant with the code and principles of poetry, and it is obvious that Qur‘ān is not a book of poetry. Even a non-Arab would not accept that, not to say anything of the eloquent Arabs. On the contrary, the Arabs used to call him a poet in the literal sense of the word, that is they regarded his thoughts as imaginary. Their objective was to call him a liar, because the word *Shā‘ir* is also used in the sense of lie, and *Shi‘r* for a liar.

وَالشُّعْرَاءُ يَتَّبِعُهُمُ الْغَاوُونَ ﴿٢٢٤﴾

As for the poets, they are followed by the straying people. -
26:224

The word شاعر (Shā‘ir) is used in this verse in its technical and commonly known meaning, that is the rhythmic composer. This interpretation is endorsed by a narration in Fataḥul Bārī that when this verse was revealed, the respected companions, Sayyidnā ‘Abdullāh ibn Rawāḥah, Ḥassān ibn Thābit and Ka‘b ibn Mālīk رضى الله عنهم اجمعين, who were well known poets, went crying to Holy Prophet ﷺ and submitted that this verse was revealed by Allah Ta‘ālā and they too were poets. Then Holy Prophet ﷺ said ‘You go through the last part of the verse’. What he conveyed was that their poetry was not frivolous having bad intent, hence they were included in that exception which is mentioned in the last part of the verse. The commentators have therefore, elaborated that in the beginning of the verse the disbeliever poets are purported, because depraved people, defiant Satan and disobedient Jinn followed and narrated their poetry. (Fataḥul Bārī)

The place of poetry in Islamic Shari'ah (jurisprudence)

In the beginning of these verses the poetry is disapproved strongly and appears an object of God's wrath. But towards the end of Sūrah the exception allowed proves that poetry is not condemned completely. Only that poetry is condemned and abominable which encourages Allah's disobedience or puts hindrance in His remembrance, or disgraces and condemns someone falsely, or be obscene or leads to obscenity. But that poetry which is free from these sins and unbecoming things is exonerated by Allah Ta'ālā through this verse (227). *إِلَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ* (227). On the other hand the poetry which deals with the subjects of wisdom based on sermons and teachings is part of the virtues carrying reward in the Hereafter as reported by Sayyidnā 'Ubayy Ibn Ka'b رضي الله عنه *إِنَّ مِنَ الشَّعْرِ حِكْمَةً* that is 'There is a poetry which contains wisdom'. (Bukhārī) Ḥāfiẓ ibn Ḥajar has said that here wisdom stands for rightful things based on truth. Ibn Baṭṭāl has explained that the poetry dealing with Oneness of Allah, His remembrance and love for Islam is desirable and praiseworthy, and in the hadith under reference that type of poetry is in view. However, the poetry dealing with falsehood and obscenity is contemptible. This explanation is also confirmed by the following narrations:

(1) 'Amr ibn Sharīd has reported through his father that Holy Prophet ﷺ had listened 100 couplets of 'Umayyah ibn aṣ-ṣalt from him.

(2) Muṭarrif has reported that he traveled with Sayyidnā 'Imrān ibn Ḥuṣain رضي الله عنه from Kūfa to Baṣrah and he used to recite couplets on every stage of the journey.

(3) Ṭabarī رحمه الله تعالى has reported about the distinguished companions and *tābi'īn* that they used to compose, listen and recite poetry.

(4) Imām Bukhārī رحمه الله تعالى has reported that Sayyidah 'A'ishah رضي الله عنها used to compose poetry.

(5) Abū Ya'lā has reported from Ibn 'Umar رضي الله عنه that the Holy Prophet ﷺ has said, "Poetry is a composition". If its subject matter is good and useful, it is good, and if its subject is bad or sinful, it is bad. (Fataḥul Bārī)

Tafsīr al-Qurṭubī has remarked that from among the ten jurists of

Madīnah, who are well known for their learning and graciousness, ‘Ubaidullāh ibn ‘Utbah ibn Mas‘ūd ؓ was an eloquently articulate poet, and the poetry of Qāḍī Zubair ibn Bakkār was compiled in a book. Qurtubī has reproduced an observation of Abū ‘Amr that no intelligent and knowledgeable person would take the poetry comprising of nice subjects as bad. It is also worth noting that among the noble companions who were the religious leaders, there is none who had either not composed the poetry himself or had not recited or listened to the composition of others with fondness.

Where poetry is condemned in certain narrations, it is with the purpose that one should not get engrossed so much in it that he neglects his worships and the Qur’ān. Imām Bukhārī has elaborated this subject in a separate chapter in which he has quoted from Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah ؓ :

لَا نَمْتَلِي جَوْفَ رَجُلٍ قَبْلَ أَنْ يَرِيَهُ خَيْرٌ مِّنْ أَنْ يَمْتَلِيَ شِعْرًا

‘It is better to fill up one’s belly with pus than to fill it up with poetry’.

Imām Bukhārī has explained that according to his understanding this statement portrays the situation when the poetry becomes dominant over remembrance of Allah Ta‘ālā, or in one’s involvement with the Qur’ān or with acquiring knowledge. But if the poetry is kept under check, it is not bad. Similarly, there is consensus of Ummah that the poetry which is obscene or contains defaming subjects is unlawful and is not permitted. This ruling is not exclusive to poetry only, but applies to any writing – prose or poetry. (Qurtubī)

Sayyidnā ‘Umar ibn Khaṭṭāb ؓ had dismissed his governor, ‘Adiyy ibn Naḍlah from his position because he used to compose obscene poetry. Sayyidnā ‘Umar ibn ‘Abdul ‘Azīz رحمه الله تعالى had directed to exile ‘Amr ibn Rabī‘ah and ‘Abul Aḥwaṣ on the same charge, but when ‘Amr ibn Rabī‘ah repented on his deeds, his repentance was accepted. (Qurtubī).

Every art or learning, which makes one oblivious of Allah and Hereafter, is contemptible

Ibn Abī Jamrah has ruled that excessive involvement in poetry and all such learning or art which makes one oblivious of the remembrance of Allah Ta‘ālā and causes doubts in the mind about beliefs of Islam or helps

in promoting spiritual ills, fall under the same ruling as is given for contemptible poetry.

The depravity of the followers is often an indicator of the depravity of the leader

وَالشُّعْرَاءُ يَتَّبِعُهُمُ الْغَاوُونَ ﴿٢٢٤﴾

As for the poets, they are followed by the straying people. -
26:224

The poets are blamed in this verse that their followers are misled. Here the question arises that if it is the followers who are misled, how could the poets be blamed for the acts which their followers adopt? It is because the wrong deeds adopted by the followers are normally the signs of misdeeds of the one who is followed. But Maulana Ashraf ‘Ali Thanavi رحمه الله تعالى has clarified that this rule will apply when the one who is followed has a hand in the misdeeds of the followers. For instance if there is no check on telling lies and backbiting in the meetings of the leader, and because of that his followers, who sit in his company, also adopt this habit, then this sin committed by the followers will be regarded as a manifestation of the sin of the one who is followed. But if the misdeeds are different from the deeds of the leader, then he cannot be made responsible for the misdeeds of his followers. For example, if a person follows a scholar for his beliefs diligently and sincerely, but does not follow the scholar in his righteous deeds and morals, then the scholar cannot be blamed for the former's lack of righteousness and morality. (Allah is pure and knows best).

Alḥamdulillāh

**The Commentary on
Sūrah Ash-Shu‘arā’
Ends here.**